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## Chile

**Post:** Santiago

### Chile's Volcanic Eruption Puts Salmon Industry at Risk

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

**Approved By:**

Anita Katial, Agricultural Attaché

**Prepared By:**

Luis Hennicke, Agricultural Specialist

**Report Highlights:**

On April 22, Chile's Calbuco volcano in the Los Lagos Region" (the lakes region) erupted, where much of Chile's dairy, livestock and salmon production are centralized. According to the Chilean Salmon Producers Association (Salmon Chile) eight percent of the industries production of alevin and smolt are at risk. Some producers have also requested authorization to move lake salmon cages to be moved to other areas. Chile produces 800,000 MT (approximately \$2.5 billion) of salmon per year. That is 45 percent of the world's salmon production and makes up over half of its total agricultural exports.

## **General Information:**

### **Calbuco Volcano Eruption**

On April 22, Chile's Calbuco volcano in the Los Lagos Region" (the lakes region) erupted, leaving a 15 kilometers ash plume over the city of Puerto Montt. The volcano is located approximately 600 miles south of Santiago. The Chilean Government (GOC) declared a state of emergency and the evacuation of thousands of residence within a 20 km radius of the volcano. President Bachelet and a team of Ministers (Health, Agriculture, Economy and Public Works) are visiting the area affected by the eruption to determine the next steps in confronting the emergency. The GOC has had its hands full with multiple emergency disasters over the past couple of months including forest fires to the west, flooding in the north, drought in the south, and a volcano eruption in Villarica. The Calbuco volcano is located in Chile's tenth region that is home to the cities of Osorno, Puerto Monte and Puerto Varas where much of Chile's dairy, livestock and salmon production are centralized.

### **Impact on Salmon Industry**

While it is difficult to quantify the impact of the Calbuco eruption, initial reports indicate that farmers and salmon producers in the Los Lagos Region will experience the highest damages due to the thick layer of ash already falling in the area. This region is also the center of meat and milk production and an important number of salmon farms are located on Lake Llanquihue. These farms are waiting for the results of chemical analysis on the level of toxicity in the water before taking any action, according to La Tercera (a major news agency).

According to the Chilean Salmon Producers Association (Salmon Chile) eight percent of the Alevin (newly spawned salmon) and smolt production (small fish raised until they reach 120-140 grams in weight before being transferred to ocean or lake cages) are at risk as a result of the volcano Calbuco eruption in the Los Lago Region.

As a result of the Calbuco volcano eruption on Wednesday, Salmon Chile reported that out of a total of 8 operations (mostly hatcheries and also some cages) that operate in the area affected close to the volcano, there are at least four which were damaged. The damages are being accessed with difficulty, as several of them are not, as the area is under evacuation and authorities are prohibiting people to within a 20 kilometers radius of the volcano. There are also another eleven operations close to but outside of the 20 kilometers perimeter that had to be evacuated, including all workers.

According to Salmon Chile, its member currently have 300 million alevin and smolt in the production pipeline, and approximately 25 million (around 8%) alevin and smolt are being produced in the affected volcano zone.

Out of the total operations in the area only 3 production centers have requested the authority to be able to move the fish to other operations somewhere else. This can take place only once the Authority (Sernapesca) allows them to proceed. Authorization has been requested and is pending.

Chile produces 800,000 MT (approximately \$2.5 billion) of salmon per year. That is 45 percent of the world's salmon production and makes up over half of Chiles total agricultural exports. The United

States imports about \$1.2 billion of Chile's Atlantic salmon each year, followed by Japan at \$1 billion.

### Dairy and Livestock Industries

According to Chile's National Emergency Agency (ONEMI) under the Ministry of Interior and Public Security, reported that 300 farmers in the region could be affected. Initial estimates indicate that those farmers maintain 2,000 cattle, 2,000 sheep and 350 small animals. Farmers were urged to evacuate the area.

Post will monitoring conditions to see if there will be any impact on those sectors as the situation unfolds.



This view from Puerto Varas, southern Chile, shows a high column of ash and lava spewing from the Calbuco volcano, on April 23, 2015. (David Cortes Serey/AFP/Getty Images)